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TAGS: [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [AF](#) [GM](#)  
SUBJECT: GERMAN SUPPORT FOR ELECTIONS IN AFGHANISTAN

REF: STATE 108855

Classified By: POLITICAL MINISTER COUNSELOR JEFF RATHKE.  
REASONS: 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) Post delivered reftel points to MFA Office Director for Afghanistan Affairs Ruediger Koenig October 17, emphasizing the importance of holding the 2009 elections on schedule and encouraging Germany to make a significant contribution so that the process is fully funded. Koenig agreed that since the Government of Afghanistan had decided to hold the elections in 2009, they should go forward as scheduled and that the international community should do everything it could to support them.

¶2. (C) Koenig added, however, that Germany thought it was important to maintain Afghan ownership of elections. He noted that some were advancing the proposition that the successful conduct of the elections should be considered a litmus test for the international community's engagement in Afghanistan. Koenig thought this could be "dangerous" for the international community to take on the burden of guaranteeing success for this next round of elections. In the end, these elections were Afghan elections, not ours. The Afghans had to bear the final responsibility for the results.

¶3. (C) With regard to financial support of the voter registration process and the elections themselves, Koenig noted that Germany had contributed 10 million Euros this year and would contribute at least as much, if not more, in each of the next two years. Koenig said that Germany was aiming to cover roughly 10% of the cost of the elections, in line with its status as the third largest national donor to Afghanistan. He confirmed that Germany was channeling its contributions through the UNDP "basket fund."

4.(C) Koenig also noted that with the recently increased troop ceiling for German ISAF forces in Afghanistan (raised from 3,500 to 4,500 in the new ISAF mandate approved by the Bundestag October 16) Germany would soon begin streaming in additional forces to provide security for the registration process. He noted that this would be especially important when the registration shifts to Kunduz, where security has significantly deteriorated in recent months. He noted that part of the RC-North Quick Reaction Force (QRF) had already deployed to Kunduz to help prepare the way for voter registration. He thought there could be upwards of 4,000 German troops (vs. about 3,500 now) in Afghanistan by early next year. Germany planned to maintain that extra margin of troops at least through the election cycle, if not permanently. Koenig said, however that Germany was not

planning at this point to increase its troop level up to the ceiling of 4,500, preferring to retain some headroom so that it could surge troops if circumstances require.

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